hGriffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

Chapter I

THE KOL TRIBE OF CENTRAL INDIA

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Distribution and Strength of the Tribe. The Kol tribe, with which this monograph deals, is one of the primitive tribes of Central India. The Central India area, in which they are found, may be described as a triangle with the Nerbudda and the Son rivers for its hypotenuse, having for one of its sides the valley of the Ganges and, for the other, the Chambal river and the Chitor hills. The Kol tribe occupies the north-eastern part of this area. While individual members may be considerably scattered the bulk of the Kols is found in the north of the Central Provinces; in Rewa State, which is included in the Central India Agency; and in the southern portions of the United Provinces adjoining Rewa State. The main centre of distribution for the Kols is Rewa State and the Kols of Central Provinces look back to Rewa as their homeland. The accompanying map of India shows the distribution of the Kols[1]. It will be seen that they belong to the highlands at the northern end of the peninsula. They live among the Vindhya mountains and in the Kaimur hills. These mountains have played an important part in the cultural and ethnological history of India. In early days, before the forests were denuded and the roads cut through, they were an effective barrier to the movements of people. They have been traditionally associated with the southernmost limits of Aryan influence. There is good evidence that they have sheltered some of the oldest races in India since the dawn of history.

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The tribe itself should be carefully distinguished from the Munda tribes of Chota Nagpur which are frequently called Kols in the generic sense. There is no specific Kol tribe in that area, although there is a group called the Larka Kols, or Hos, famous for an insurrection in the year 1832, and a part of the district of Singhbhum is called the Kolhan after them. Mention of the specific Kol tribe is made only in the Census Reports of the Central India Agency and that for the Central Provinces. In the United Provinces the Kols are classed as an exterior caste.

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The Kols stand second in strength among the Munda tribes of the Central Provinces. According to the 1931 Census the Korkus are first with 176,616 and the Kols follow with 91,556. Among all the tribes in the province the Kols stand eighth in numerical strength. In the Central Provinces as a whole the Census Reports give the following figures for the Kol tribe:

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1 Figure 1, p. 2.

[text continues on p. 3]

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

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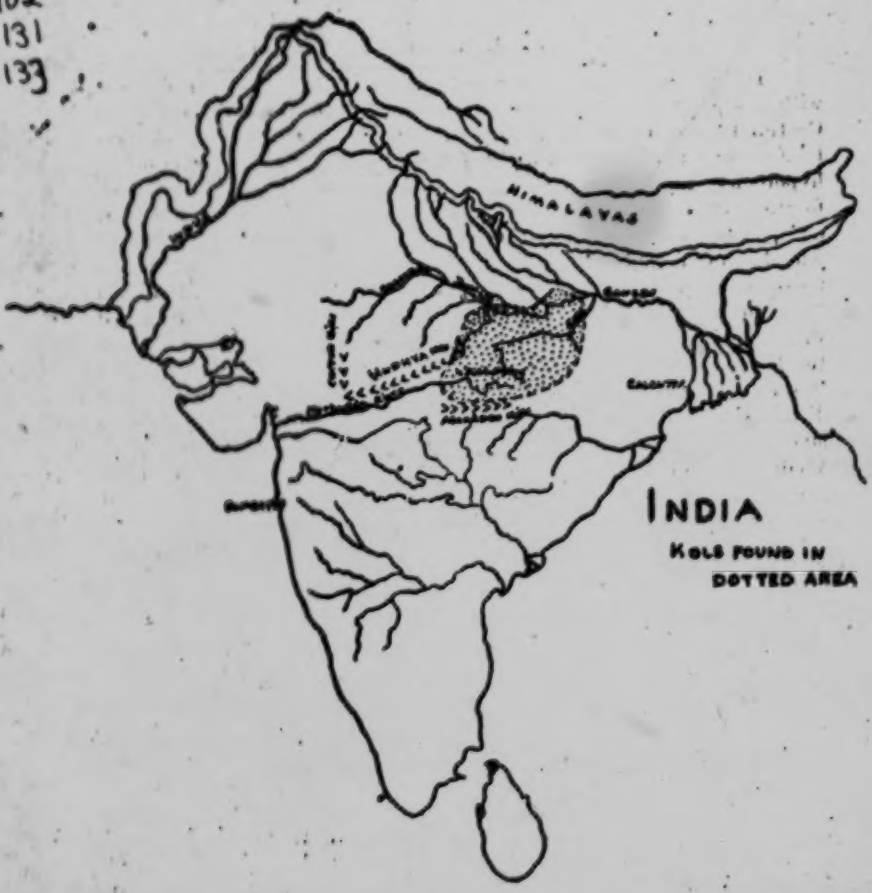

Fig. 1.